



An Internal Improvement

IT IS proposed to put the Missouri River at work for the direct benefit of the people. South Dakota has thought hard, talked long, and fought bravely for the great boon of cheap power, a resource which Providence has supplied in unlimited measure and challenged man to harness in a practical way.

The Missouri River pours its flood down through the heart of this important agricultural commonwealth and it has for a decade been the dream of her farmers to harness the giant and turn its power out on the land for the benefit of all the people. Hydro at cost for town and farm is the slogan.

More and more the conviction has grown on South Dakotans that our natural resources should be conserved by the state for the immediate benefit of her citizens and to that end the state should itself develop the water powers and supply the product to the public at cost.

To the accomplishment of this purpose there existed a constitutional barrier, prohibiting the state from engaging in an internal improvement, and the first business was the removal of this inhibition.

To do this the legislature of 1917 submitted to the voters at the regular election in 1918 a constitutional amendment that declares the development and operation of water powers within the state of South Dakota to be a public purpose and that the state may pledge its credit to carry such purpose into effect, "anything in this constitution to the contrary notwithstanding." This amendment was approved by an overwhelming majority.

So the mandate of the people came up to the legislature of 1919 and that body created an ex-officio, hydro-electric commission, composed of state officers who serve without additional compensation, and placed in the hands of this commission \$50,000, with direction to employ engineers to make a complete reconnaissance of the power potentialities of the Missouri River within the state, determine the site thereon most practicable for immediate development, provide plans and specifications and estimates of cost, together with the plans for a comprehensive transmission system and a survey of the probable market for power.

The report finally submitted by these engineers was voluminous, detailed and comprehensive, fully covering physical conditions, water resources, probable market and plans and specifications for the proposed plant and transmission. It pointed to a site near Mobridge in the northern part as most practicable for immediate development and a site at Mulehead in the southern part of the state as only secondary in importance.

The legislature was confronted by a contest between Mobridge and Mulehead for location. As a two-third vote of each house is required to appropriate money or credit, a deadlock ensued, and to clear up the situation both bills were killed. Proceeding under the initiative provision of the constitution, the people, while the legislature was still in session, formulated a comprehensive act for a development at Mobridge, as the engineers had recommended, and this bill was enacted and submitted to the electors to be voted on at the election in November, 1922.

The act provides that when 60 per cent of the minimum capacity of the Mobridge plant has been sold the commission shall proceed, without further authority, to construct the Mulehead plant.

Based on prices current in January, 1920, the river plant, dam, locks, power house, machinery, and a public roadway across the river, will cost completely installed \$9,103,000, and the transmission \$7,044,000, making the total cost of the enterprise reach \$16,147,000.

The supporters of the measure firmly believe the project will never cost the taxpayers of South Dakota a penny, but that the earnings of the plant will meet all costs. The present assessed valuation of the state for purposes of taxation is \$2,257,000,000, and in the worst aspect a seven-mill tax would sink the bonds in a single year, so that the hazard involved is much less than might be apprehended.

The pledge of the state's credit will reduce the cost of capitalization to nil; a very important consideration, indeed, in view of the fact that it cost the private enterprise at Keokuk \$3,950,000 to place its bonds.

Experience elsewhere indicates that the development may reasonably be expected to promote the establishment of industries, as well as to greatly accelerate domestic consumption everywhere, and especially on the farms. At present the region east of the Missouri is consuming more than 42,000,000 kilowatt hours annually. The minimum capacity of the proposed Mobridge plant is 87,000,000, and that it will all be needed by the time the plant is in operation does not seem a wild hope, especially in view of the fact that the present retail price averages more than 13 cents and many villages are paying as high as 30 cents for current.

A very important consideration in favor of the proposed development is the conservation of coal. It has been a long time since the people of the western prairies have gone into a winter with an adequate fuel supply, and without apprehension that the railroads may not be able to bring a sufficient supply for the needs of the season. It requires more than 200,000 tons to generate the electricity now used. By and large, the proposed plant will save the transportation of 500,000 tons annually, and the sum saved will alone maintain and operate the proposed hydro plant.

The comfort and convenience, and the release from drudgery which the development will bring to the farm wives of the state will alone justify the enterprise, and this consideration applies in only a little less measure to the women of the towns.

It is expected the project will develop existing industries and promote others, especially those which manufacture the raw materials of our own production, such as paper, woolens, leather goods and flour.



Int. Film Service

Top—In the days before the American people told Harding to hang his coat in the White House and before Harding told Daugherty to sit in the chair of Attorney-General, they fought for horseshoe supremacy in Marion. Left—Before—the ball is plainly due for a hard knock. Right—After—the ball is speeding onward in sudden flight.

be immune. Somebody will score him for spending an afternoon occasionally with a fishing pole and line in an open boat with a broad straw hat atop his head to make the sunshine behave. Unless we have improved in disposition somebody else will shout right out in open meeting, "We didn't elect him to chase golf balls."

When will we learn that we, the people, lose if the President gives all his time to the office of chief executive? He must get away from the Capitol and the White House and his official self and obtain a perspective of his job and the nation's needs. He can't do this by sitting in any chair and hovering over any desk. So, paradoxically, it often happens that a President at play is really and truly a President at work.

The spice of a President's burdened life is his hobbies. They are of vital importance. Without them as a foil or relief from his onerous responsibilities, the immense strain would crush him. The President plays golf to keep him fit. He plays today that he may be a better executive tomorrow and on each tomorrow's morrow.

spheres of rubber and meanwhile putting aside the exacting business of guiding a mighty nation on its way. He also enjoyed a real game of baseball.

Our other former President, William Howard Taft, is also a devotee of golf. When he was the nation's chief executive he regarded the game as an excellent medium for obtaining relaxation and rest from his official duties. He is still riding this same hobby and thereby keeping himself young.

President Harding has a healthy smile. He also relishes baseball. He loves to put in and care for a garden, as he considers it the duty of every man to contribute some of his labor and time toward the tilling of the soil, thus becoming a producer.

We Americans love to talk; and talk we will, particularly of public figures. President Harding will not